

**Suggested Opening Remarks**  
**Gerry Porta, USAID/OEDG**  
**City Coalition for Transparent and**  
**Accountable Governance – Effective**  
**Communication Workshop**  
**Marco Hotel, Cagayan de Oro City**  
**April 18, 2007, 9:00 a.m.**

Colleagues in development, friends, ladies  
and gentlemen;

Magandang umaga po sa ating lahat.

Thank you very much for inviting me to your  
Effective Communication Workshop. I am  
honored to be with all of you today to help  
open this important activity organized under  
the USAID-funded Transparent and Accountable  
Governance (TAG) Project of The Asia  
Foundation.

I find it particularly interesting that you  
are all concerned about communicating  
effectively. Communication planning and

being able to reach your intended audience effectively is an important business function that is often overlooked, particularly by those in the non-profit sector who think that their good work will speak for itself. Unfortunately, it does not always work this way.

Although non-government organizations (NGOs) are generally seen in a positive light, the public is frequently unable to specify the work NGOs do other than the usual assistance provided by charitable organizations.

Organizations engaged in advocacy, such as CCTAG, are at a disadvantage because they do not build potable water systems, organize feeding programs for children, distribute relief goods during disasters, or perform other activities that the public usually associate with NGOs. It is ironic because coalitions like yours that are engaged in advocacy are in particular need of allies and a constituency that can only be

developed by a greater understanding and appreciation of the work that you do.

Public support can have a direct impact on your success. Along with doing good work, you should ensure that your various stakeholders clearly understand your goals and your achievements.

Effective communication is not always easy. In the communication process even a simple message can be misinterpreted. Between what you want to say, what you said, what you thought you said, what your audience heard, and what your audience thought they heard miscommunication can easily take place. It is easy to imagine a situation where an organization interested in promoting transparency and accountability says to a mayor, "our goal is to make this city free from corruption" and in the process provoking an angry or defensive response from the mayor who asks, "are you accusing

me of being corrupt?" Clearly, miscommunication has taken place and the relationship has started on the wrong foot—a situation that could have been avoided had the organization phrased its message with greater sensitivity.

We hope that this workshop will help provide you with the tools to craft your messages more effectively in ways that generate greater understanding and support for your advocacy. Remember that good work and effective communication can result in three elements that are very important to your organization: credibility, legitimacy and, hopefully, sustainability.

We look forward to the success of this workshop and the continued active involvement of the CCTAGs in promoting good governance.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay tayong lahat.

Suggested Remarks

Gerardo A. Porta, USAID/OEDG

CCTAG Effective Communication Workshop

April 18, 2007, Marco Hotel

Clearances:

OEDG:Rwuertz (draft)

PRM:Kdonahue (draft)

ODD:Fdonovan (draft)

PAS:MLussenhop(info)

Drafted: GPorta 4/12/07

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